

Serial No. 10/606,191
Attorney Docket No. 633032-00003
Amendment and RCE

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request continued examination of the above-referenced application pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.114. A check in the amount of \$395.00 is enclosed to satisfy the necessary fee.

Claims 1, 9 and 11-18 have been amended by this paper. Claim 8 has been canceled by this paper.

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,264,675 to Brotz and U.S. Patent No. 5,931,855 to Buncke in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,686,437 to Buchman et al. The Examiner's rejections of claims 1-20 are respectfully traversed.

The Brotz and Buncke references disclose techniques for suturing tissue. The Buchman et al. reference discloses a medical implant device, such as a joint replacement prosthesis, formed from a polyimide material. In contrast, the claims of the present application are directed to a suturing technique wherein a braided suture is used to form loops under the skin, thereby closing a laceration. The Brotz, Buncke and Buchman et al. references do not, alone or in combination, teach or suggest such a technique and therefore do not render obvious the pending claims of the present application.

In particular, Applicants submit that none of the references cited in the Office action teach or suggest a suturing technique including the steps of inserting a suture into the dermis and through the subcutaneous fat layer on one side of a laceration, inserting the suture at the base of the laceration, inserting the suture through the subcutaneous fat layer and into the dermis on the other side of the laceration to form a loop under the skin, repeating the loop forming steps in another insertion 3 to 5 mm from the loop to close the laceration and tightening the suture line by applying tension to the loops to bring one side of the laceration into contact with the other side of the laceration, wherein the suture includes at least one gold thread and at least one bioabsorbable thread braided together.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and formal

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notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Applicants hereby authorize the Commissioner under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(3) to treat any paper that is filed in this application, which requires an extension of time, as incorporating a request for such an extension. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees required by this paper or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-0809.

Respectfully submitted,



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